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HOUSE MEMORIAL 58

57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2026

INTRODUCED BY

Raymundo Lara

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE AND THE
LEGISLATIVE FINANCE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT A STUDY OF PUBLIC
SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION BARRIERS, WHETHER THE BARRIERS CONTRIBUTE
TO CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM AND INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED BY
OTHER STATES TO ADDRESS CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM.

WHEREAS, addressing chronic absenteeism is a significant
challenge for public schools; and

WHEREAS, since the public health emergency declared in
2020, the percentage of students who are chronically absent has
remained high, and during the 2023-2024 school year, more than
one hundred twenty-four thousand students missed at least
eighteen school days; and

WHEREAS, research indicates that transportation barriers,
including limited bus routes, insufficient transportation

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1 funding, distance thresholds in public school transportation
2 policy and family scheduling challenges, substantially
3 contribute to student absenteeism, particularly in rural areas
4 and charter schools; and

5 WHEREAS, students deemed to live within a close distance
6 from the students' public schools also face transportation
7 barriers because state law only requires bus services for
8 students living beyond a certain distance from a public school,
9 leaving many families without reliable transportation options;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, administrators and teachers report that a lack of
12 training in state attendance policies and limited resources to
13 address transportation barriers affect the ability of public
14 schools to address chronic absenteeism; and

15 WHEREAS, other states have improved student attendance
16 rates by implementing innovative strategies, including school
17 bus route optimization, partnerships to provide student
18 transportation and technology-assisted transportation planning;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, the legislative education study committee and the
21 legislative finance committee are able to act on behalf of the
22 legislature to evaluate evidence-based innovative strategies
23 implemented by other states to determine if those strategies
24 can reduce or eliminate transportation barriers for New Mexico
25 students and address chronic absenteeism;

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1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
2 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the legislative
3 education study committee and the legislative finance committee
4 be requested to conduct a study during the 2026 legislative
5 interim to:

6 A. examine whether transportation barriers for New
7 Mexico students contribute to chronic absenteeism and whether
8 transportation barriers particularly contribute to chronic
9 absenteeism of students in rural areas, students attending
10 charter schools and students deemed to live within a close
11 distance from a public school;

12 B. identify innovative strategies implemented by
13 other states that have reduced or eliminated transportation
14 barriers and addressed chronic absenteeism; and

15 C. review the effectiveness of existing state
16 funding for transportation and review whether that funding is
17 administered equitably; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative education
19 study committee and the legislative finance committee report
20 the findings of the study and recommendations for legislative
21 or executive action on or before December 31, 2026; and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
23 transmitted to the governor, the secretary of public education,
24 the chair of the legislative education study committee and the
25 chair of the legislative finance committee.

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